

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacement assisting method, comprising:

a step of receiving, from a first user apparatus, request information expressing a wish to replace a first ~~unit comprising part of~~ detector in a first X-ray CT apparatus ~~owned by said first user~~ with a second ~~unit~~ detector;

a step of receiving, from a second user apparatus different from said first user apparatus, release information informing release of a second detector ~~unit comprising part of~~ in a second X-ray CT apparatus ~~owned by said second user and~~ usable in said first X-ray CT apparatus;

a step of presenting inquiry information to said first user apparatus communicating via a computer whether said a first user is going to use ~~said second unit released from said second user~~ a refurbished second detector as ~~a replacement unit~~ the second detector for said first X-ray CT apparatus,

~~wherein the first apparatus and the second apparatus are medical equipment~~ wherein said refurbished second detector is the second detector.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a step of making a provisional contract with said first user apparatus when information expressing a wish to use said second ~~unit~~ detector is received from said first user apparatus in response to the inquiry.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, wherein:

said first ~~unit~~ detector and said second ~~unit~~ detector ~~are units having~~ have substantially a same capability ~~that need to be replaced by a worker.~~

Claim 4 (Canceled).

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, wherein:

said step of presenting the inquiry information is a step of offering maintenance for said second ~~unit~~ detector ~~taken from said second user.~~

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a step of calculating and ~~presenting~~ receiving a trade-in price of said second ~~unit to~~ detector in said second user ~~in a case~~ apparatus where said ~~second user wishes to replace said~~ second ~~unit~~ detector may be replaced with a third ~~unit~~ detector.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 6, wherein:

said step of ~~presenting~~ receiving the trade-in price is a step of ~~presenting~~ receiving in said second user apparatus a price of said third ~~unit~~ detector after deduction of the trade-in price of said second ~~unit~~ detector.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 6, wherein:

said step of ~~presenting~~ receiving the trade-in price includes, making a trial calculation of the trade-in price by adding expenses needed for replacement including a transportation fee to a trade-in base price, judging a value of a trade-in from the trial calculation, and ~~presenting~~ receiving the trade-in price ~~to~~ in the second user apparatus when the trade-in is ~~judged as~~ determined to be profitable.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 6, further comprising:

a step of ~~having said second user wishing to trade in said second unit present~~ receiving operation history information through an on-line or off-line transmission in a case where said apparatus is configured to automatically record the operation history information during use, and ~~judging~~ determining a value of a trade-in with understanding of a use status of said ~~unit~~ second detector for trade-in from the operation history information,

wherein said step of ~~presenting~~ receiving the trade-in price includes determining the trade-in price based on a result of the value ~~judgment~~ determination.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, wherein:

said step of presenting the inquiry information is a step of presenting said first user apparatus a replacement cost lower than a price of said second ~~unit~~ detector when newly purchased.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a step of ~~confirming with~~ receiving from said first user apparatus whether said second ~~unit~~ detector as a desired replacement unit is a new unit or a secondhand unit or whether a secondhand unit is acceptable.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, further comprising:

~~a step of confirming with~~ receiving from said second user ~~about~~ apparatus information related to post-treatment of said second ~~unit~~ detector.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a step of ~~presenting~~ receiving information about a maintenance fee of said second ~~unit~~ to detector by said second user apparatus.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a step of ~~presenting~~ receiving expenses needed for replacement with said second ~~unit~~ to detector by said first user apparatus.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a step of ~~presenting~~ receiving a dispatch date of a service person who performs ~~unit~~ detector replacement ~~to~~ by said first user apparatus.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a step of confirming a reply from said first user apparatus; and

a step of managing at least one of a production line in a factory, a ~~unit~~ detector maintenance line, and dispatch of a service person, depending on the reply from said first user apparatus.

Claim 17 (Canceled).

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacing method, comprising:

a step of notifying, from a user apparatus to a unit provider ~~and manager~~ apparatus, a replacement request of a ~~unit~~ detector comprising part of an apparatus;

a step of notifying, from said user apparatus to said unit provider ~~and manager~~ apparatus, a specific target replacement ~~unit~~ detector; and

a step of ~~communicating via a computer~~ receiving, from said user apparatus to said unit provider apparatus ~~and manager~~, whether ~~said user wishes~~ a new ~~unit~~ detector or a secondhand ~~unit~~ detector for the target replacement ~~unit~~ detector is required,

~~wherein the apparatus is medical equipment.~~

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacing method according to claim 18, wherein:

said ~~unit~~ detector is a ~~unit~~ detector that needs to be replaced by a worker.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacing method according to claim 18, further comprising:

a step of confirming whether the ~~unit~~ detector specified by said user apparatus is replaceable in said apparatus.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacing method according to claim 18, further comprising:

a step of fixing a date when a worker replaces said ~~unit~~ detector with the target replacement detector.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacing method according to claim 18, further comprising:

a step of ~~confirming with~~ receiving in said user apparatus whether said ~~unit~~ detector to be replaced is for trade-in.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacing method according to claim 22, further comprising:

a step of ~~confirming~~ receiving in said user apparatus a trade-in price or an assessed price of said ~~unit~~ detector for trade-in ~~when said user wishes a trade-in~~.

Claim 24 (Original): The apparatus unit replacing method according to claim 23, wherein:

said step of confirming the trade-in price or the assessed price includes, making a trial calculation of the trade-in price or the assessed price by adding expenses needed for

replacement including a transportation fee to a trade-in base price, and judging a value of the trade-in from or assessed the trial calculation.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacing method according to claim 23, further comprising:

a step of ~~having said user wishing to trade in said unit present~~ presenting operation history information through an on-line or off-line transmission in a case where said apparatus is configured to automatically record the operation history information during use, and judging a value of the trade-in with understanding of a use status of said ~~unit~~ detector for trade-in from the operation history information,

wherein said step of confirming the trade-in price or the assessed price includes determining the trade-in price or the assessed price based on a result of the value judgment.

Claim 26 (Withdrawn): An apparatus unit replacement assisting system, comprising:

a plurality of user apparatuses owned by a plurality of apparatus users; and

one or more management apparatus owned by an apparatus manager,

wherein said management apparatus includes:

communication means for enabling communications with said plurality of user apparatuses;

request information managing means for managing request information received from a first user apparatus among said plurality of user apparatuses through said communication means, said request information expressing a wish to replace a first unit comprising part of a first apparatus owned by an apparatus user of said first user apparatus with a second unit;

release information managing means for managing release information received from a second user apparatus, different from said first user apparatus, among said plurality of user

apparatuses through said communication means, said release information informing release of a second unit comprising part of a second apparatus owned by an apparatus user of said second user apparatus and usable in said first apparatus; and

inquiry information notifying means for notifying, through said communication means, said first user apparatus of inquiry information, asking whether the second unit in said second apparatus is going to be used as a replacement unit for said first apparatus, and

wherein each user apparatus includes:

communication means enabling communications with any one of the one or more management apparatuses;

information notifying means for notifying said management apparatus of said unit replacement request information and said unit release information through said communication means; and

information presenting means for presenting said inquiry information received from said management apparatus through said communication means.

Claim 27 (Withdrawn): A management apparatus used in an apparatus unit replacement assisting system comprising a plurality of user apparatuses owned by a plurality of apparatus users and one or more management apparatus owned by an apparatus manager, said management apparatus being characterized by comprising:

communication means for enabling communications with said plurality of user apparatuses;

request information managing means for managing request information received from a first user apparatus among said plurality of user apparatuses through said communication means, said request information expressing a wish to replace a first unit comprising part of a first apparatus owned by an apparatus user of said first user apparatus with a second unit;

release information managing means for managing release information received from a second user apparatus, different from said first user apparatus, among said plurality of user apparatuses through said communication means, said release information informing release of a second unit comprising part of a second apparatus owned by an apparatus user of said second user apparatus and usable in said first apparatus; and

inquiry information notifying means for notifying, through said communication means, said first user apparatus of inquiry information, asking whether the second unit in said second apparatus is going to be used as a replacement unit for said first apparatus.

Claim 28 (Withdrawn): The management apparatus in the apparatus unit replacement assisting system according to claim 27, further comprising:

status managing means for managing at least any one of a production line status in a production factory of said apparatus, a maintenance line status of said unit, and a dispatch status of a service person who performs a replacement work, according to the replacement request information from said first user apparatus.

Claim 29 (Withdrawn): A user apparatus used in an apparatus unit replacement assisting system comprising a plurality of user apparatuses owned by a plurality of apparatus users and one or more management apparatus owned by an apparatus manager, said user apparatus being characterized by comprising:

communication means enabling communications with any one of the one or more management apparatuses;

information notifying means for notifying said management apparatus of said unit replacement request information and unit release information through said communication means; and

information presenting means for presenting inquiry information received from said management apparatus through said communication means.

Claim 30 (Withdrawn): An apparatus unit replacement assisting system, characterized by comprising:

managing means for managing information of a unit comprising part of an apparatus for each of apparatuses installed at a plurality of sites; and

confirming means for confirming, in response to information related to a request to replace said unit in an apparatus installed at any one of said plurality of sites, whether a secondhand unit is acceptable as a target replacement unit for said unit.

Claim 31 (Withdrawn): An apparatus unit replacement assisting system, characterized by comprising:

obtaining means for obtaining information of a unit comprising part of an apparatus for each of apparatuses installed at a plurality of sites; and

managing means for managing, in response to information related to a request to replace said unit in an apparatus installed at any one of said plurality of sites, at least one of a production line in a production factory of said apparatus, a maintenance line of said unit, dispatch of a service person who performs a replacement work of said unit.

Claim 32 (Withdrawn): An apparatus unit replacement assisting system, characterized by comprising:

obtaining means for obtaining information of a unit comprising part of an apparatus for each of apparatuses installed at a plurality of sites; and

presenting means for presenting, in response to information related to a request to replace a first unit with a second unit in an apparatus installed at one of said plurality of sites, a sales price of said second unit after deduction of a trade-in price of said first unit to a request sender site.

Claim 33 (Withdrawn): The apparatus unit replacement assisting system according to claim 32, wherein:

said presenting means makes a trial calculation of the trade-in price by adding expenses needed for replacement including a transportation fee to a trade-in base price, judges a value of a trade-in from the trial calculation, and presents the trade-in price when the trade-in is judged as profitable.

Claim 34 (Withdrawn): The apparatus unit replacement assisting system according to claim 32, wherein:

said obtaining means is operation history information during use that is automatically recorded by said apparatus; and

said presenting means judges a value of a trade-in with understanding of a use status of the unit for trade-in from the operation history information, and determines the trade-in price based on a result of the value judgment.

Claim 35 (Currently Amended): The apparatus unit replacement assisting method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a step of receiving, from a third user apparatus different from said first and second users user apparatus, request information expressing a wish to use said first ~~unit~~ detector in a third apparatus ~~owned by said third user~~.

Claim 36 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacing method, comprising:
a step of receiving request information from a first user apparatus via a network for exchanging a first ~~unit~~ detector comprised in a ~~first medical equipment~~ X-ray CT apparatus with a second ~~unit~~ detector;

a step of receiving release information from a second user apparatus via the network for releasing a second ~~unit~~ detector comprised in a second ~~medical equipment~~ X-ray CT apparatus, the second ~~medical equipment~~ X-ray CT apparatus being different from the first ~~medical equipment~~ X-ray CT apparatus; and

a step of sending inquiry information to the first user apparatus via the network, thereby inquiring of the first user apparatus as to whether or not the first ~~unit~~ detector comprised in the first ~~medical equipment~~ X-ray CT apparatus is replaced with the second ~~unit~~ detector released from the second ~~medical equipment~~ X-ray CT apparatus.

Claim 37 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacing method, comprising:
a step of sending a replacement request from a user apparatus to a unit manage apparatus via a network, notifying the unit manage apparatus of a specific ~~unit~~ detector of a ~~medical equipment~~ X-ray CT apparatus; and

a step of sending a notification from the user apparatus to the unit manage apparatus via the network notifying the unit manage apparatus of whether the replacement request is a new ~~unit~~ detector or a secondhand ~~unit~~ detector.

Claim 38 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacing method, according to claim 36, wherein ~~the first medical equipment and the second medical equipment are X-ray CT apparatuses~~, the first ~~unit~~ detector and the second ~~unit~~ detector are multi slice detectors,

and the second ~~unit~~ detector is configured to collect a greater number of slices than the first ~~unit~~ detector.

Claim 39 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacing method, according to claim 36, wherein ~~the first medical equipment and the second medical unit are X-ray CT apparatuses~~, the first ~~unit~~ detector is a single slice detector, and the second ~~unit~~ detector is a multi slice detector.

Claim 40 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacing method, according to claim 38, wherein the first ~~unit~~ detector and the second ~~unit~~ detector include data acquisition systems relating to the multi slice detector.

Claim 41 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacing method, according to claim 39, wherein the first ~~unit~~ detector and the second ~~unit~~ detector include data acquisition systems relating to the single slice detector and the multi slice detector.

Claim 42 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacing method, according to claim 40, wherein the first ~~unit~~ detector and the second ~~unit~~ detector include software for reconfiguration.

Claim 43 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacing method, according to claim 41, wherein the first ~~unit~~ detector and the second ~~unit~~ detector include software for reconfiguration.

Claim 44 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 36, further comprising:

a step of receiving operation history information about the second apparatus, and judging a value of the second ~~unit~~ detector based on the operation history information.

Claim 45 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 37, further comprising:

a step of receiving operation history information about the second X-ray CT apparatus, and judging a value of the second ~~unit~~ detector based on the operation history information.

Claim 46 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacing method, ~~according to claim 36, wherein the first medical equipment and the second medical equipment are MRI apparatuses~~ comprising:

a step of receiving request information from a first user apparatus via a network for exchanging a first magnetic field coil comprised in a MRI apparatus with a second magnetic field coil;

a step of receiving release information from a second user apparatus via the network for releasing a second magnetic field coil comprised in a second MRI apparatus the second MRI apparatus being different from the first MRI apparatus; and

a step of sending inquiry information to the first user apparatus via the network, thereby inquiring of the first user apparatus as to whether or not the first magnetic field coil comprised in the first MRI apparatus is replaced with the second magnetic field coil released from the second MRI apparatus.

Claim 47 (Currently Amended): An apparatus unit replacing method, ~~according to claim 37, wherein the first medical equipment and the second medical equipment are MRI apparatuses~~ comprising:

a step of sending a replacement request from a user apparatus to a unit manage apparatus via a network, notifying the unit manage apparatus of a specific magnetic field coil of a MRI apparatus; and

a step of sending a notification from the user apparatus to the unit manage apparatus via the network notifying the unit manage apparatus of whether the replacement request is a new magnetic field coil or a secondhand magnetic field coil.

Claims 48-49 (Canceled).